

***TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE***

*Thursday March 2, 2023*

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Office of Workforce Strategy*

***H.B. 6354: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GREEN JOBS CORPS PROGRAM***

Senator Slap, Representative Haddad, Representative Haines, Senator Kelly, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, my name is Kelli-Marie Vallieres, and I am the Chief Workforce Officer for the Office of Workforce Strategy.

The Office of Workforce Strategy is the principal state agency tasked with understanding the macro-landscape of workforce development in the State of Connecticut; charged with organizing the multitude of employment, training, and education programs statewide; and operationalizing the strategic plan of the Governor's Workforce Council. These activities position OWS as a central anchor in any and all workforce initiatives.

I am here today to submit testimony expressing concerns regarding HB 6354: An Act Establishing A Green Jobs Corps Program. This bill aims to establish a green jobs corps program to outline a talent development strategy, help communities respond to climate change and reduce carbon emissions.

The Office of Workforce strategy, in collaboration with other state agencies and partners mentioned in H.B. 6354, is already involved in substantial efforts to address climate change and reduce carbon emissions. As such, I believe that this bill is redundant to work already being done in the state.

OWS has spearheaded the creation of CareerConneCT, a newly launched, \$70M program funded through state ARPA dollars. CareerConneCT has made 19 competitive grants to workforce boards and community-based organizations throughout the state to provide training in in-demand fields, with more than \$10.4M going toward clean energy and infrastructure. One grantee, the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) is focusing on expanding existing and developing new programs in energy efficiency, solar, offshore wind, construction, OSHA, energy management, etc. Another grantee, Efficiency For All is providing short-term job training for individuals looking to enter the energy efficiency industry. A third grantee, the CT Building Trades Training Institute, is developing a statewide program providing construction readiness opportunities for individuals seeking a unionized building trades registered apprenticeship.

While our current efforts are robust, developing a holistic plan for Green Jobs is beyond the work of any one agency. To that end, OWS is working with DEEP and DECD to launch the Connecticut Clean Economy Council (CCEC), which was created by Executive Order 21-3 in 2022. This Order tasked multiple agencies to develop strategies and policies to strengthen our climate mitigation, clean energy, resilience, and sustainability programs, thereby lowering emissions and advancing the state of economic and environmental justice for our residents. OWS and other agencies are currently supporting this DEEP and DECD-led effort.

The CCEC will:

- Identify opportunities to leverage state and federal funding to scale economic opportunities associated with clean energy, climate, and sustainability investments; and maximize local economic development benefits from investments needed to meet climate and sustainability goals;
- Ensure Connecticut's workforce is trained to deliver climate and sustainability solutions;
- Support equitable and diverse participation in climate and sustainability economic development opportunities from both diverse employers and diverse job seekers; and
- Form working groups to address workforce development in specific sectors within the fields of clean energy and sustainability.

Given these efforts, we believe that HB 6354 proposes work that is already under way, and therefore do not recommend any additional activities be assigned to the Clean Economy Council. We look forward to your feedback and collaboration as we work with DEEP and DECD to develop the Clean Economy Council.

OWS welcomes collaboration with this committee, our agency partners, and other stakeholders to best address our state's workforce needs as it pertains to climate change and climate mitigation.